Gladys Vanderbilt, Fortune Wasted, Flees Her "Feudal Nightmare."

A Prosaic Retreat to London Ends a Romantic Dream Dissipated by Rude Realities, Huge Expenses, Hungarian Peasants and a Noble Husband's Ways

Vienna, May 8.

THE announcement that the Count and Countess Laszlo Szechenyi are going to live permanently in London makes another famous international marriage look like a failure.

When Gladys Vanderbilt became Countess Szechenyi she was going to live like a princess of fiction on her husband's estates in Hungary. She would divide her time between feudal demesnes in the country and picturesque palaces in the city. She would enjoy the admiration of a primitive but loyal peasantry. She would add brilliance to the court of an emperor. Now she has gladly given up the ancestral demesnes and her magnificent palace in Budapest and all the primitive feudal delights of life in Hungary. She is going to live in London, probably in a flat, where she will be in close touch with up-to-date America.

The reasons for this collapse of a romantic programme are partly financial and largely personal. The Count had made enormous inroads into his wife's large fortune and then the feudal privileges of her position turned out to be very different from what fancy painted them.

The privileges for her consisted mainly in handing out large checks. When she reached the ancestral estate she found it was without bathtubs and drainage. She put in these and all kinds of other American conveniences at great expense.

The loyal peasantry proved an unmitigated nuisance. They swarmed into the house at all times of the day, wearing top boots and long knives and exhaling very ancient odors. They followed her wherever she went. She was expected to take part in all sorts of picturesque but unpleasant ceremonies that grated on the nerves of a highly refined New York girl.

For instance, the peasants expected her to attend all the weddings, to kiss the bride, to kiss the babies (later), and to taste the food and drink served at these primitive and highly hilarious gatherings. Paprika and puszta soon became a bore.

The Szechenyi family behaved as if they had conferred a very exalted honor upon her in accepting her alliance and her money. They bored her to death with the greatness and glories of the Szechenyis for the last eight hundred years. Her friends say that she had horrible dreams in which dead and gone Szechenyis and other patriots fought over their battles above her prostrate form.

They told her she ought to learn Hungarian. She made one attempt and gave it up with a sore feeling about the jaw. Now they say bitterly that she is the only Countess Szechenyi who never spoke Hungarian.

On top of all this she had the humiliation of finding that she had no position at the court of Vienna, that her husband kept up all his old associations without regard to her, that he spent her money lavishly without giving her any adequate return for it, and in short that she was nothing but "the little American cashier."

It was a shock to her to find that she could not be presented at the court of Vienna, because of the rigid rule that no one may enjoy that privilege who does not possess sixteen quarterings of nobility.

She would have preferred a palace in Vienna, but the Szechenyis told her it was the proper thing to build one in Budapest, and the fact that she was outside the pale in Vienna reconciled her to this view.

For a time she was buoyed up with the hope that she might be a queen, for a "band of patriots," unfolded a glittering project to make Count Szechenyi King of Hungary on the death of the Austrian Emperor. The "patriots" got about a million dollars and that was all it meant to Gladys Vanderbilt.

Now the Szechenyis are exceedingly indignant that the Countess should think of abandoning Budapest for London. They are actually making the puszta ring with their outcries.

"One has to know the Szechenyi history to appreciate what the present situation means to that family," said an intimate friend of the illustrious house. "The Szechenyis belong to one of the few families of the ancient aristocracy which has remained purely and passionately patriotic. While other young noblemen have been fascinated by the charms of the Viennese court and other young noblewomen have preferred Austrian husbands, the men and women of the Szechenyi house have lived in their own country, and they have only, with rare exceptions, intermarried elsewhere.

"They do not go to the Viennese court except for official duties, as in the case of Count Laszlo's father, who was a distinguished statesman and Ambassador, and often at the Emperor's court as a matter of necessity, and so with the Count's eldest brother, who was for some years Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to Denmark and Norway. They consider it their duty to stay in Hungary as a family.

"Every bearer of the name, with the exception of the former Gladys Vanderbilt, speaks the national language, whether a member of the house by marriage or ibrth. This is in contrast to many other old houses of the aristocracy, where the German of fashionable Vienna and the French of Paris are the languages used.

"The Vanderbilt marriage was looked upon with great favor by Count Laszlo's relatives. They supposed that the bride would have a domestic establishment in Budapest which would add an attraction to the aristocracy to counterbalance the gayeties of Vienna. They supposed it would also be possible to get her to dedicate her time and money to the benevolent plans of charity and philanthropy which have absorbed the Szechenyi family in Hungary for many centuries, but they have been bitterly disappointed.

"And now to think that this little American moneybag should run away from Budapest, should forsake the Szechenyi estates and the Szechenyi glories and complain that our national customs are barbarous! It is an outrage, sir, and for a less affront than this the Szechenyis have shed rivers of blood in past times!"

The inroads made by Szechenyi extravagance and Szechenyi ambitions into the fortune left the Countess by her father, the late Cornelius Vanderbilt, have been alarming.

Five millions had been settled on the count at the time of his marriage. This amount was placed in a bank in Vienna before the marriage ceremony and later two million more was added to this. But the last amount was generally credited to the Countess.

The marble palace in Budapest with its art treasures and rare furnishings cost one million. It was this first great expenditure that led the Count to believe that there could never be an end to his wife's fortune.

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He insisted that this palace and the expensive improvements made on the family estates be paid for by his wife. This attitude is held invariably by these titled fortune hunters who need American money to keep body and soul together. They contend that as the estates will belong to their children, their wives should pay the price. But it is only at such times that the foreign husband acknowledges that the mother of his children has any real right in them.

The Count's personal expenses were very large, his friendships expensive, then there were debts, past and future, to consider and he flatly refused to spend *his* money for the benefit of his children.

And so the million dollar mansion was paid for by the Countess.

Then the count decided that he would like to have another estate in the heart of the Magyar country, in the wild mountains of Hungary, and the Countess spent one million eight hundred dollars in creating the superb Komorn estate. In graceful compliment to the fortune that permitted this luxury, the Count named the new estate "Gladys Castle."

At this time Mrs. Vanderbilt and her sons became alarmed over the expenditures of the young people and they tried to call a halt. On talking over the situation they found that half a million had been spent in renovating and refurnishing Castle Szechenyi at Oermezoe, and nearly six hundred thousand on the Komorn estate in making it one of the great show places of Hungary. This means that the Countess's fortune of twelve millions had been depleted by four millions, and this amount being tied up in land was practically non-productive. Adding to this the five millions settled on the Count which he would consent to use only as he pleased and it can readily be seen why the Vanderbilt family were uneasy.

But there were other expenditures that drained even the great American fortune of the Vanderbilt heiress. When she married the Count the Szechenyi jewel boxes were empty. As an American bride and heiress it was natural that the Countess should want to have jewels as valuable as those worn by the Archduchesses and other ladies of rank. It is estimated that it took one million dollars to replenish this jewel box. The countess's jewels are the envy of every one who sees them. In justice to the Count it must be confessed that he spent some of his own money in this task. The Count admits now that he did not realize how the money was melting. He, like the average man who marries, instead of earning, a fortune, supposed that there could be no end to the money.

And now the Count develops a new phase. Having been foiled in his political aspirations and having lost interest in his new estates, he goes in for high finance. He takes the three millions left of his five and attempts to make himself Money King of Hungary. Being absolutely ignorant he goes boldly in where wise men would fear to tread. He forms a syndicate to gain control of the transportation corporations of his country. He speculates on the Bourse and while successful at first soon becomes so involved that the conservative estimates of his losses place them at three millions. He was no better at playing the financial game than he was at the political.

But all this time the Vanderbilt family has not been idle. Several months ago Mrs. Vanderbilt, senior, and her two sons insisted on going over the affairs of the young people. This took time. Two months ago Mrs. Vanderbilt hurried to London, where she was met by the Count, and the result of this meeting is apparent in the announcement that the Szechenyis will live in London permanently. The Vanderbilts feel that it is time for the Count to drop his former expensive friends and pleasures. Mrs. Vanderbilt insists that what is left of the twelve millions must be tied up for the Szechenyi children. And this is about to be done, in legal form. The income only of this remnant can be spent by the parents. Added to this is a rumor that Mrs. Vanderbilt has offered to pay the rent of the London establishment so long as the young "spenders" live up to this agreement.

The Count's men friends were also very expensive. He financed several noblemen who had no means of their own and he helped the Prince Miguel de Braganza in his struggles to win Anita Stewart.

The Szechenyis could live on their mountain estate in spite of the reduction in their incomes, but the Countess has had more than enough of the loyal and unwashed peasantry.

How the Countess Was Surrounded by Swarms of Picturesque but Uncouth Peasants on Her Husband's Estate.

The Countess Szechenyi in Hungarian National Costume, and Her Little Daughter, Countess Cornelia Szechenyi.

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It Is Wrong to Say "Knots per Hour"

NINE out of ten persons will say that such and such a steamship is capable of steaming at "twenty knots per hour." A nautical man would simply say "twenty knots." Which would be correct? The latter, of course. The mistake arises from the fact that the landsman thinks that a "knot" is just the nautical term for a "sea mile," which is, in the rough, 6,080 feet, or about one and one-eigth land or statute miles.

A knot is not a distance at all—it is speed. The word "speed" combines distance and time. For instance, if we wish to speak of the speed of a locomotive we refer to it as so many miles per hour. There is no single word in the language to express speed units, so we must use two words—miles and hours.

As is well known, the sailor has a language peculiar to himself, and he has invented, above other things, a single word for unit of speed. Thus a speed of one nautical mile per hour is called "one knot." Hence it is excessive to tack on another "per hour" after the word knot when the word already includes one "per hour."

Perhaps some will ask how the word knot originated, and the explanation of this is simple. When a seaman wishes to ascertain the speed of his craft he does so by means of a log line, which consists of a piece of wood called the "log" or the "log ship," to which is attached a length of line. The line is knotted at regular intervals, the distance between two consecutive knots bearing the same proportions to a sea mile that the time of a sand glass used in connection with the operations bears to an hour.

Thus, for instance, if after the log is thrown overboard the line, paying freely out lets out fifteen of its knots in the time that it takes the sand glass to run down, then the ship is making fifteen knots.